

# St. Johnsbury

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St. Johnsbury Caledonian.

Remarkable Specimen of Virginia "Reconstruction."

WARWICK, Va., Jan. 27, 1876.

To the Editor of the Caledonian:

DEAR SIR:—In the winter of '72-'3, I

taught day and evening schools here for the colored people. At the request of the pastor and deacons of the colored church, I came here Wednesday evening, Jan. 19, and commenced a series of Gospel meetings in the colored church. Wednesday evening the house was filled to overflowing. At least forty persons pledged themselves that they would speak to some one about his or her soul's salvation before Saturday night. Friday evening, we had a young people's meeting. A very deep interest was manifested, and some very touching requests for prayers were presented. At the close of the meeting nearly all unconverted persons in the house, estimated at 200, expressed a desire to become Christians now. At the request of the pastor, the meetings were continued on Sabbath and we have had a meeting every night this week with an ever deepening interest.

The colored school is taught by a Mrs. Edits, a white woman whose husband is in the penitentiary for murder. She has been often lead to say that she considered it a disgrace to teach a colored school, and would not do it were she not obliged to for a living. She has a Mrs. Harris (also white) for an assistant teacher. They are the same teachers who taught the school here when I was here three years ago. Having heard many complaints from the parents that their children were not learning anything, yesterday afternoon I visited the school and you would have wept as I did, if you could have seen those two schools in one room, both teachers seated by a stove with two or three switches in their hands, and the children crowded just as close as they could pack into the seats that did not half fill the room. It is very manifest that the teachers do not care whether the scholars learn or not. The best scholar in the school has only reached division of simple numbers. There was no order whatever.

On enquiry I learned that some months ago part of the benches were sent to the carpenter's shop for repairs, and as the School Board refuse to pay him but \$18 for his work, while he charged \$20, he has retained the benches from the middle of September until now, and all this time the school has not had over half as many seats as it needed, but neither the teachers nor the School Board cared, but on one of the parents complaining to one of the School Board I am told, he said that if Mrs. Edits did not have accommodation for so many she would have to turn out some of them.

After the close of the school, some of the children desired us to stay and sing a few of Sankey and Bliss' hymns, which we use in our meetings. Mrs. Edits gave her consent and said she would stay but had an engagement.

Just then Mrs. Grant, the other teacher, to whom I had not spoken, came over and said: "You old Yankee, you have no business here." I turned around and said: "What did you say, madam?" She answered: "You Yankee abolitionist, what are you here for, intruding on Southern ladies?" "Southern ladies, indeed," said I. "Heaven save the mark!" At that the children laughed, and she went away muttering curses.

That evening John Grant, the town sergeant, came to my room and said that the teachers had complained to the School Board and to the town authorities that my coming into the school had so stirred up the children that they could not manage them, and that if I was in town in the morning the town authorities would not be responsible for what the young men would do to me, as I had no business what kind of a school they had.

I told him I would make it my business to report what kind of a school I found, and to tell the young men if they wished to display any Southern chivalry, just to go ahead. I heard nothing more until this afternoon, when the said Grant came with a writ charging me with being a book agent, and with selling Sankey and Bliss' hymn books without a license, contrary to an Act of the corporation. He took me before the Judge. I stated that I came to Warren as a missionary and had been holding gospel meetings in the colored church; that I used the book and had given away many, but had sold not over the amount of two dollars worth at cost. He said that was a violation of an act of the corporation, and he gave judgment \$500 fine and costs, making \$640, which I paid. Then Joseph Nelson, the assessor of Internal Revenue, said that I also in selling those books had broken the laws of Virginia and was liable to a fine of not less than \$50 and costs; but he would give me twenty-four hours to leave Warren, and if I did not leave in that time he would have me arrested and fined.

We had a wonderful meeting last night; I think there were at least one hundred persons weeping when I asked all who wished to give themselves to the Lord, to come forward and give themselves to the Lord in a covenant never to be forgotten, subscribing to a covenant which I had prepared, and which was baptized with tears as it was being signed. Yours truly,

G. W. LITCH.

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and Steel, and Hardware.

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